

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 05841 180912 Z

12

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 L-03 EUR-25 CU-04 PA-03 PRS-01 USIA-12

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 RSR-01 /073 W

----- 098409

O R 180850 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 4430

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 5841

LAMBRAKIS FOR AMBASSADOR MOYNIHAN

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IN, SCUL

SUBJ: NORTON SIMON' S STATUE

REF: LONDON 5782

1. INDIAN PRESS, BEGINNING MAY 13, HAS REPORTED THAT THE NATARAJA STATUE IS IN THE POSSESSION OF MR SIMON. TIMES OF INDIA, MAY 17 CLAIMS AMBASSADOR T. N. KAUL HAS BEEN INSTRUCTED TO RAISE THIS WITH THE STATE DEPARTMENT. STORY ALLEGES THIS MATTER WAS RAISED PREVIOUSLY WITH THE US GOVERNMENT TO NO AVAIL. TIMES, LIKE OTHER PAPERS, NOTES THAT MANY RARE AND VALUABLE WORKS OF ART HAVE BEEN REMOVED ILLEGALLY FROM INDIA TO THE US AND OTHER COUNTRIES.

2. SPECIFICALLY, TIMES REPORTS THAT NATARAJA AND FOUR OTHER STATUES LEFT INDIA IN 1965 AND THAT MR SIVARAMAMURTI, DIRECTOR OF DELHI NATIONAL MUSEUM, WENT TO THE US IN 1971 TO CONFIRM THAT THE GENUINE NATARAJA STATUE HAD REACHED THE US.

3. NO ONE IN THE GOVERNMENT OR PRESS HAS YET RAISED THIS WITH
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US. WE ARE NOT AWARE OF EARLIER INDIAN GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIONS, EITHER HERE OR IN WASHINGTON, THOUGH SEVERAL YEARS AGO THERE WERE NEWS STORIES THAT THE STATUE HAD GONE TO THE US. HOWEVER, GENERAL PROBLEM OF SMUGGLED ART COMING UP PERIODICALLY IN INDIA PRESS AND GOI SEEMS INCREASINGLY AWARE THAT INDIA'S HERITAGE IS LEAKING AWAY, OFTEN WITH THE CONNIVANCE OF OFFICIALDOM. IT SEEMS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT US DEALERS AND BUYERS HAVE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF THIS LAXNESS.
SCHNEIDER

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NMAFVVZCZ

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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